

REMARKS

Entry of the present preliminary amendment is respectfully requested.

By means of the present preliminary amendment, the current Abstract has been deleted and substituted with the enclosed New Abstract which better conforms to U.S. practice. In addition, the specification has been amended in the same manner as the parent application serial number 09/421,645, including adding a priority claim to the parent application which is still pending.

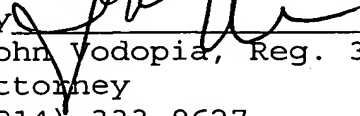
Further, claims 1-15 have been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 16-36 have been added, where independent claims 16, 23 and 30 include the patentable feature of the allowed claims in the parent application Serial No. 09/421,645 which has been allowed.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If any informalities remain, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned in order to expedite allowance.

Please charge any fee deficiencies and credit any overpayments  
to Deposit Account No. 14-1270.

Respectfully submitted,

By   
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December 5, 2003

Enclosure: New Abstract